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Sociolinguistic Parameters of Pāṇini's Sanskrit¹

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1. Introduction

The nature of the language described by Pāṇini has long been debated by scholars. Looking at these debates allows us to clarify our own conceptions, and advance our understanding of the issues in some new directions. Consider the following characterizations of Pāṇini's grammar and the language described by his grammar.

Cardona (1988: 643):

"Of course, Pāṇini was from the northwest of the subcontinent, not from the north-central area. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to consider that he too described a language current within a certain social stratum, the language of an élite."

Cardona (1988: 645-6):

"This grammar accounts for usage which is accepted as the speech of model speakers. There can be no doubt whatever that Pāṇini had native control of this language. Nor can one reasonably doubt that Kātyāyana and Patañjali also had a native command of the language described."

Cardona's characterization of Pāṇini's language seems on the whole reasonable. However, what does the word "native" mean, and how does

"nativeness" coexist with a language being the "language of an élite"? Several recent works carry their enthusiasms for the "nativeness" of Pāṇini's Sanskrit in a direction away from "the language of the élite". Such is the case with the works of Laddu (1974), Sarangi (1985), and Bhandare (1986). Laddu begins his work on the *Evolution of the Sanskrit Language from Pāṇini to Patañjali* with a "presupposition" that "Sanskrit was a means of communication in the ordinary usage during the period" (Laddu 1974: 2). Sarangi (1985: 8) echoes the same opinion: "That Sanskrit was the means of social and household communication in those times is now a widely accepted fact based on clear and unambiguous evidence of statements scattered throughout the works of P, Kṛy Ptj." Bhandare (1986: 4) says: "Thus the expression *bhāṣā* used by Pāṇini unmistakably refers to the spoken language of his times. Even if it is taken for granted, for the sake of argument, that this language was the speech of the educated, there is no conclusive evidence to prove that the language of the commoner was altogether different from this *bhāṣā*." Bhandare approvingly refers to V.N. Misra (1966: 12): "There is no conclusive evidence regarding the speech of the common people being different from Sanskrit of Pāṇini, in Pāṇini's own geographical area (i.e., the North Western India) prior to the date of Aśoka's inscriptions". The other extreme of the spectrum of opinion is represented by the opinions of Whitney, Benfey etc. who considered Pāṇini's grammar to be a grammar without a language, that there was a "grammarians' Sanskrit". As Cardona 1976: 239) points out, this extreme view is not tenable.² Recently, S.D. Joshi (1989:268) has discussed Pāṇini's Sanskrit in relation to Patañjali's Sanskrit. He says (p. 268): "In Patañjali's days Sanskrit had become a *śiṣṭabhāṣā* 'language spoken by the *śiṣṭas*' and it was not in common use any more." "Thus in Patañjali's days Sanskrit was a second language preserved and acquired through a literary tradition. The vernaculars became the mother tongue and gradually became less and less like Sanskrit (p. 272)". Now, referring to Sanskrit in Pāṇini's days, Joshi (p. 273) says "In Pāṇini's days Sanskrit was probably spoken as the language of religion and scholarship, Prakrit vernaculars being preferred in private intimate talk as well as in market." This would suggest that the situation of Sanskrit was the same during the time of Pāṇini and Patañjali. Joshi (p. 267) clearly disagrees with Laddu's view that Sanskrit was the means of communication in ordinary usage during Kātyāyana's and Patañjali's times. In general, Joshi (1989) discusses in detail the situation of Sanskrit as seen in Kātyāyana and Patañjali, but extends that discussion to the situation as seen in Pāṇini, without a discussion of evidence from Pāṇini.

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2. Linguistic Facts versus Élite Opinion

In this whole discussion, terms such as "native", and "ordinary usage" have been uncritically used without necessary qualifications. It is also necessary to make a distinction between a factual record of language use as done by a modern linguist, doing his field work, and the grammatical works such as that of Pāṇini. These works are not recordings of linguistic usage as such, but represent an élite evaluation of which usage was considered to be proper. I think it is time to make a clear distinction between the usage of Sanskrit in Pāṇini's or Patañjali's time, and their description of Sanskrit. Historians and anthropologists dealing with texts like *Manusmṛti*, for example, have rightly made the distinction between theoretical descriptions in these works and the actual facts of history. Manu's text gives us a picture of how the élite Brāhmaṇas expected the social system to function. Manu's description is a necessary combination of facts and opinions. Certain kinds of social ways were considered to be "proper" or conducive to Dharma, while others were not. Thus, Manu's description of social values is not a description of the whole range of how people actually behaved, but of those ways which were considered to be proper. Thus, looking at Manu, it is difficult to figure out how people actually behaved in his times. Thus, we know more about Manu's ideas about "proper behaviour", than about how people actually behaved. Coming to Pāṇini, we need to deal with the same issue. As Patañjali rightly points out, grammar does not create linguistic usages, but makes a *dharma-niyama* "restriction on the (religious) merit" of usages.⁴ The grammar tells us which of the all possible usages found among the people are considered to be meritorious, proper, and élite. It tells us little about how people actually speak. This is not to say that Pāṇini's grammar or Manu's Law-book are based on totally fabricated languages or social codes. However, just as Manu's Law-book is not a value-free description of how people actually behaved, Pāṇini's grammar is not a value-free description of how people actually spoke. Pāṇini's grammar tells us about which usages he considered proper, and little about what else was going on in the actual usage of the people.

3. Pāṇini describes a subset of actual usage

For example, Pāṇini derives a word like *Vaiyākaraṇa* from the word *vyākaraṇa* through irregular insertion of *ai* before *y*.⁵ If one were to follow the normal *Vṛddhi* for the first vowel in secondary derivation, we would get *vyākaraṇa* as a secondary derivative from *vyākaraṇa*. Thus, Pāṇini is forced to go to a prescription of an irregular insertion of *ai*. Now we know that there were dialects of Sanskrit where the sandhi of *vi+ā+kaṇa* resulted in

the *viyākaraṇa* rather than in *vyākaraṇa*. Such were the dialects ascribed to Vyāḍi and Gālava. If the word *viyākaraṇa* is our starting point for a secondary derivation, the *i* would normally change to its Vṛddhi in *ai* and we would get *vaiyākaraṇa* as a normal formation. However, Pāṇini did not accept ~~the~~ form *viyākaraṇa*, but accepted the secondary derivative *vaiyākaraṇa* as proper Sanskrit, and thus the irregular derivation. This shows that Pāṇini was not describing the total usage of spoken Sanskrit, but only what he thought was proper Sanskrit. Different grammarians did not agree upon what was proper Sanskrit. If we did not have other sources for Sanskrit besides Pāṇini, we would not know that a form such as *viyākaraṇa* was part of Sanskrit usage, though it was not acceptable to Pāṇini. Pāṇini does not give us the forms which were not acceptable to him.

One can legitimately say that Pāṇini's description of the usage of contemporary Sanskrit is based on his observation of that usage. However, it is not a value-free description of all Sanskrit usage. From his description, we know what he would approve as proper usage. He provides us only a partial picture of the actual usage, but a much clearer picture of the élite opinion about that usage.

4. External Language versus Domains of Usage

Pāṇini makes no reference to time or history.⁶ The language he describes has no time restrictions for him. "Vedic" and "current spoken" are simply two domains of the same language for him. His unqualified rules refer to this timeless language, or to put it in modern terms, to the common factor of all historical and regional phases of Sanskrit.

No model speaker ever spoke this eternal timeless total language. To get to a description of the norms of usage of a particular domain, we need to combine the common rules with the domain-specific rules. Thus, all common rules combined with rules relating specifically to the Vedic domain provide us with Pāṇini's description of the Vedic usage. The same way, the common rules combined with rules specific for the domain of the current spoken language (*bhāṣā*) provide us Pāṇini's description of the total current spoken usage which he considered to be proper usage.

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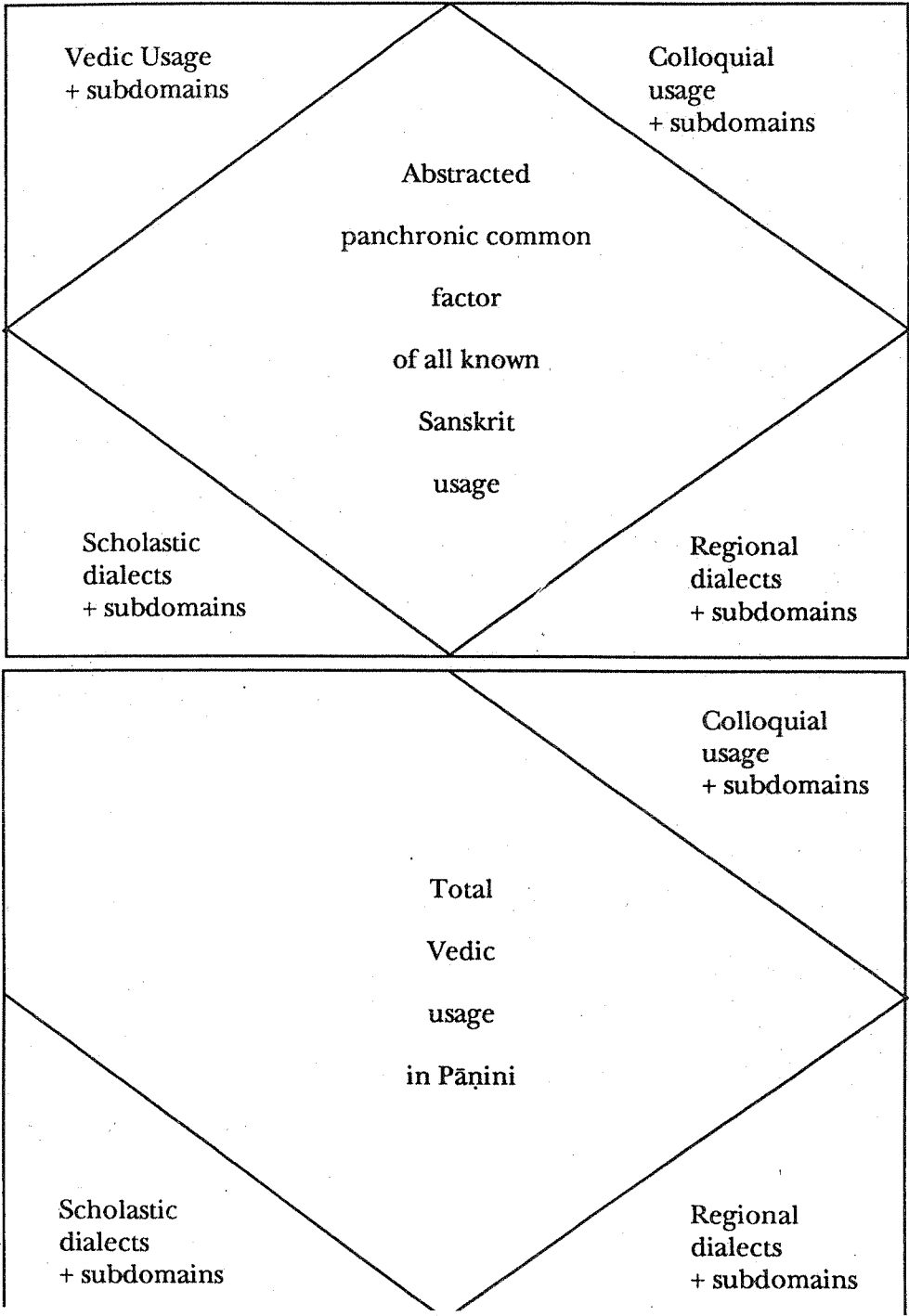
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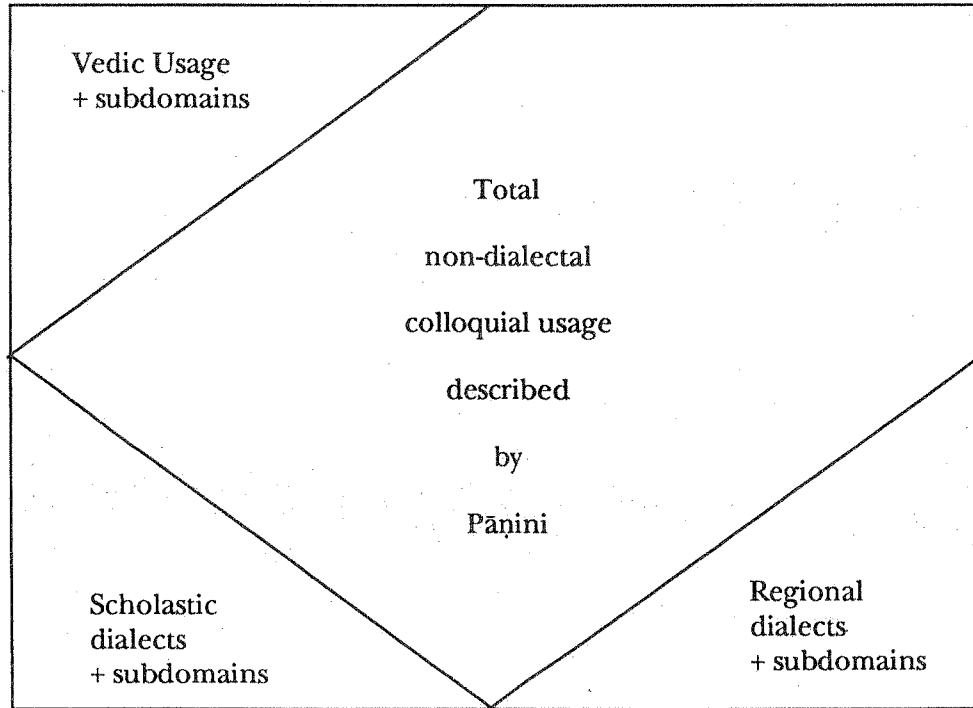
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5. Patañjali's Sanskrit: First or Second Language?

Considering the situation of Sanskrit usage as described by Patañjali, it seems unlikely that Sanskrit was a first language in his time.⁷ The story of Yavāṇastarvāṇa proves the point. Patañjali tells us⁸ that these great sages spoke the proper Sanskrit words *yad vā naḥ* and *tad vā naḥ* during ritual, but spoke *yavāṇa* and *tarvāṇa* on other occasions. Patañjali says that this was proper behavior, because the correct Sanskrit usage was required only during the performance of ritual, while it was not required elsewhere (*yājñe karmaṇi sa niyamaḥ, anyatra aniyamaḥ*). Patañjali's great sages obviously chose to speak Prakrits on non-ritual occasions, and hence acquired the tag *yavāṇastarvāṇa*. Patañjali says that the demons used incorrect usage (= Prakrit?) even during ritual. Thus the picture presented in Patañjali would suggest that the élite speakers of Sanskrit were generally Brahmana males who used this language during ritual (and related teaching), but switched to Prakrits in other contexts. Women and non-Brahmanas generally spoke Prakrit (or Dravidian?) languages.

One could perhaps argue that Patañjali depicts a Sūta "bard, chariot driver" speaking Sanskrit to a grammarian, and that this may indicate that

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non-Brāhmaṇas may also be included among speakers of Sanskrit.⁹ This is a somewhat debatable inference because of the ambiguous status of the community of Sūtas. Were they a Brahmanical community? At least Manu (X.11) says: "From a Kṣatriya by the daughter of a Brāhmaṇa is born a son called according to his caste a Sūta." The Buddhist canonical texts of the Theravāda school present an argument that Kṣatriyas do not accept such a Kṣatriya-Brāhmaṇa hybrid child as a Kṣatriya, but that Brāhmaṇas do accept such a child to be a Brāhmaṇa.¹⁰ While there is no confirmation of such acceptance in the Brahmanical Dharmaśāstras, the fact that the epic literature such as the *Mahābhārata* was largely created and transmitted by Sūtas is openly admitted in the Brahmanical tradition, and is not held against the sanctity of his literature. This would allow us to make an assumption that the Sūtas were closely allied with the Brahmanical community. Thus their ability to speak Sanskrit need not be generalized to all non-Brāhmaṇas.

6. Pāṇini's Sanskrit: First or Second Language?

What do we find in Pāṇini? Is Pāṇini describing a language which is strictly confined to ritual and high learning? There is sufficient evidence to prove that this is not the case. His numerous references to formation of village names, tribe-names, names of wells, and numerous formations in the sense of "blame", "accusation", etc. show that he is referring to a usage which is not restricted to ritual performance.¹¹ Kiparsky (1979: 7) says: "Pāṇini was describing not some fixed corpus of texts but all of Sanskrit as he spoke it. A large amount of vocabulary from various domains, especially proper names and words from practical life (commerce, agriculture, food preparation, plants and animals, warfare, weights and measures) cannot be found in the older literature simply because it does not deal much with concrete technical topics. Yet this lexical material is thoroughly covered in Pāṇini's word-formation rules." It is clear that Pāṇini is dealing with a colloquial spoken form of Sanskrit. But whose usage of Sanskrit is Pāṇini dealing with?

7. Sanskrit : A Second Language for Brāhmaṇa Males

Is Pāṇini truly describing a house-hold language, a language used in common dealings by the whole spectrum of society, including children, women, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras? V.N. Misra, Bhandare and others would like us to believe that the language described by Pāṇini covers this entire spectrum of usage. Pāṇini's rules, however, depict a somewhat different picture. The target audience for Pāṇini's grammar is quite clearly the Brāhmaṇa males, and no one else. This is clear from the very wording of the rules. Consider the following rule:

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P.8.2.83 (*pratyabhivāde 'sūdre*): "In responding to a salutation of a non-Śūdra person, the final syllable of the utterance becomes extra-long and high-pitched".

A careful analysis of this rule shows us that the rule is written for a male Brāhmaṇa speaker or user of Sanskrit. It is intended to describe how a Brāhmaṇa speaker uses a certain mode of language if he is speaking to a non-Śūdra. It tells us nothing about how the Śūdras addressed each other or the upper-caste people.¹² Pāṇini clearly was interested not in describing how the Śūdras spoke to anybody, but in describing how a Brāhmaṇa speaker spoke to Śūdras and non-Śūdras. Kātyāyana's *Vārttikas* on this rule show a slightly different, and perhaps a deteriorating, social interaction, but point clearly to who the audience for Pāṇini's rule was intended to be. Kātyāyana adds women and calumnious persons (*asūyaka*) to the exclusion of the Śūdras.¹³ This would suggest that the rule is intended for a speaker who is neither a Śūdra, a woman, nor a calumnious person. Kātyāyana further says that this rule of prolation and high-pitch vowel applies optionally when one is addressing Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas. This would also suggest that the target speaker assumed by the rule did not include Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas. The rule says nothing about how the Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, Śūdras, women, and calumnious persons speak, but how one should speak to them. Thus, it is clear that the rule is intended for the Brāhmaṇa male speaker. The best interpretation of the rule, taken along with Kātyāyana's *Vārttikas* is that a Brāhmaṇa male uses prolation etc. when responding to the salutation of another Brāhmaṇa male. Responding to Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas, he may or may not use this respectful form. Finally, he does not use this respectful form for women, Śūdras, and calumnious persons. The situation in Pāṇini, as compared with that in Kātyāyana, was arguably better, in that the respectful form was prescribed in responding to non-Śūdras without distinction. However, it is still a description of the male Brāhmaṇa usage.

8. Pāṇini and the Dharmaśāstras: a Common Pattern

If the above analysis is correct, then it would seem that there is a great deal of common approach shared by the texts on Dharmaśāstra and the grammar of Pāṇini. The Dharmaśāstras declare that the customs of the various regions, castes, families etc. are too diverse, and that they will mainly describe what is commonly shared.¹⁴ The Dharmaśāstra texts, thus describe an abstracted common factor, and then they describe the regional peculiarities as deviations from this abstracted common factor. Similarly, the notion of Dharma is eternal, without history, and yet the peculiarities of the domain of the Kali age are described as exclusions specifically

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that there is a great rmaśāstra and the the customs of the and that they will rmaśāstra texts, thus describe the regional on factor. Similarly, yet the peculiarities clusions specifically

applicable in the Kali age. This method is shared by Pāṇini. Again, the audience of the Dharmaśāstra literature is also primarily restricted to Brāhmaṇa males. There are more rules about how Brāhmaṇas should deal with others, than about how those others deal with each other. Thus, the focus of their concern is the behaviour of the Brāhmaṇa males. Thus, we find the statement: *na brāhmaṇo mlecchet*¹⁵ "a Brāhmaṇa should not act like a Mleccha." How about a Kṣatriya, or a Vaiśya, or a Śūdra? Is it proper if they act like a Mleccha? The texts are silent on this point. The simple reason is that the texts were not primarily concerned with the behaviour of others, but mainly with that of the Brāhmaṇas. The amount of energy spent on describing the rules for other groups respectively goes down as their social distance from the Brāhmaṇas increases. Pāṇini's grammar follows the same general pattern, and hence Pāṇini's linguistic description has the same orientation. It is a description of the élite language used by Brāhmaṇa males. Pāṇini's grammar is a description by a Brāhmaṇa grammarian, of the male brāhmaṇa second language, for the benefit of the male Brāhmaṇa learners. One could say that the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* is a description of the élite usage, but the word 'élite' in English alone does not sufficiently convey this restricted domain.

9. Who spoke Sanskrit to whom?

What are the features of this male Brāhmaṇa usage of Sanskrit described by Pāṇini? The rules would have us believe that the Brāhmaṇas spoke Sanskrit to non-Brāhmaṇas, including the Śūdras and women. Depending upon who they were speaking to, the usage had certain linguistic peculiarities. The Brāhmaṇas used Sanskrit in non-ritual contexts, talking about various villages etc., and in contexts which involved blaming and accusing others. Numerous rules refer to sarcasm. While the Sanskrit literary and religious texts have a good deal of sarcasm etc., one cannot agree with Joshi's restrictive view (1989: 273) that "in Pāṇini's days Sanskrit was probably spoken as the language of religion and scholarship."¹⁶ The evidence in Pāṇini shows that it was much more than that. But it was much less than what the other side claims.

Was Sanskrit as described by Pāṇini a first language? There is no evidence in Pāṇini, and certainly not in Kātyāyana and Patañjali, to show that the Sanskrit described by these grammarians was a first language. If women did not speak Sanskrit, and there is no evidence they did, we cannot argue that Brāhmaṇa children learned Sanskrit as a first language. However, While Patañjali's Yavānastravāṇa sages would rather switch to Prakrit in non-ritual contexts, Pāṇini expected Brāhmaṇa males to use Sanskrit while speaking to non-Brāhmaṇas and women. Thus, as compared

to Patañjali, Sanskrit was probably used more extensively by the Brāhmaṇa males in Pāṇini's days. Thus, Pāṇini's Sanskrit comes across as a second language, which was more widely used than in the days of Patañjali.

10. Sanskrit-Prakrit Bilingual/bidialectal conversation?

Does it seem absurd that Pāṇini's Brāhmaṇa males would speak Sanskrit to others including women? There is no evidence to show that they spoke only Sanskrit speaking to these other folks. The best interpretation of Pāṇini's rules would seem to be a conditional interpretation: "if a Brāhmaṇa uses Sanskrit to speak to so-and-so, then" Even in the high Sanskrit of Pāṇini, there is evidence that a whole lot of seemingly Prakrit usages were simply accepted as Sanskrit. A good example of such acceptance is the range of short-forms for a compassion-word like *upendradattaka* "that poor Upendradatta". The accepted short-forms include *upiya*, *upika*, *upaḍa* etc.¹⁷ Assuming *upika* to be a high Sanskritic form, one can easily derive *upiya* through normal rules of Prakrit. Thus, Pāṇini's Sanskrit is not totally dissociated from Prakrit. It incorporates some of it.¹⁸ Secondly, in the northwestern Prakrits, more Sanskritic consonants and consonant clusters are preserved, as compared to Prakrits elsewhere. Thus, the diglossic gap between Prakrit and Sanskrit is smaller in the northwest, making mutual comprehension between speakers of Sanskrit and Prakrit easier.¹⁹

11. Pāṇini's Sanskrit: High but not supra-normal

Thus, we can narrow down the confusion regarding Pāṇini's Sanskrit considerably. Pāṇini, to the extent he refers to *bhāṣā* with its regional peculiarities, is describing a current spoken form of Sanskrit which the Brāhmaṇa males acquired as a second language, but used very widely in ritual as well as non-ritual contexts. They also used this form of Sanskrit, besides Prakrits, to speak to non-Brāhmaṇas and women. However, the grammar says nothing about the linguistic usage of these other classes. There is no evidence in Pāṇini that these other social groups spoke Sanskrit. This current spoken form of Sanskrit described by Pāṇini was still a truly spoken form with living accent features.²⁰ However, the fact that these accents of spoken Sanskrit died very soon afterwards probably implies that this spoken form of Sanskrit in Pāṇini's days was in the very last phase of being a genuinely spoken language. It also seems that Sanskrit had not as yet emerged as a language of super-normal status, but it was simply at the high end of a normal range of linguistic usage. This is indicated by Pāṇini's use of the humble unassuming word *bhāṣā* "speech" for it. In centuries to come, this was no longer the case. Sanskrit was later elevated to a super-normal status.

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12. Chronological Considerations

To place this discussion in a broad chronological perspective, one can say that a form of Sanskrit most likely was close to being the first language of the Rgvedic Aryan tribes. However, the presence of Prakritisms in Vedic as far back as the *Rgveda* complicates our understanding of the relationship between these ancient Prakrits and Vedic Sanskrit. We shall not go into these complex issues in this paper.²¹ We will simply note that the question if and when any form of Sanskrit was a first language of its users is an as yet unresolved question. With the increasing convergence of the Vedic Aryans with the indigenous peoples, Indo-Aryan and non-Aryan vernaculars gradually began to take over the role of the first language for the post-convergence populations, while Sanskrit became more and more limited to the priest class. The early phase of this process is seen in the prose of the *Brāhmaṇas* and Pāṇini's grammar. Here, the *Brāhmaṇas* are not monolingual speakers of Sanskrit, but they do use Sanskrit extensively. The evidence suggests that there were social pressures on the *Brāhmaṇas* to maintain a capacity to use Sanskrit. However, there is little evidence that the rest of the society used Sanskrit. By the time of Patañjali, the *Brāhmaṇas* seem to have given up on the use of Sanskrit outside of the ritual performances, and they felt it was proper to use Prakrits outside of the ritual. Thus, while Sanskrit was a second-language for both Pāṇini and Patañjali, the extent of the use of Sanskrit diminished from the time of Pāṇini to that of Patañjali. Thus, there is indeed a change in the sociolinguistic parameters for Sanskrit from Pāṇini to Patañjali, but one must note that throughout this period, Sanskrit was a second language, and not a first language of its users.

13. Pāṇinian Bhāṣā: A Koiné?

M. Witzel (1989: 109) proposes an important new idea. He says; "In the sequel, I will try to show that there was something like a Vedic Koiné, but that this 'educated Sanskrit' of the Brahmin community which they used, as it is attested for Uddālaka Āruṇi, in their disputations, from Madra (Punjab) to Videha (Bihar), existed in many local varieties based on the various forms of Old Indo-Aryan and of the underlying Prakrit dialects spoken in the particular area. Unfortunately, we have access to only one testimony that does not form part of the Vedic cannon and yet is closely linked to it, namely Pāṇini's grammar which records many instances of his local North-Western educated speech, the *bhāṣā*, the probable predecessor of the Middle Indian Gandhārī." Can one look at Pāṇini's *bhāṣā* as a Koiné? Witzel (1989: 231) argues that the late Vedic brāhmaṇas were constantly discussing among each other the details of ritual practices.

These discussions were carried on by the Brāhmaṇas belonging to the same branch of Vedic learning as well as across different Vedic branches. "The constantly ongoing discussion of the ritual was supported by the habitual travelling of the Brahmins to the various parts of N. India in order to seek employment or to strive for victory in ritual discussion (*brahmodya*)." Witzel states: "we therefore witness, as the outcome of this constant travelling, a Koiné type of spread of dialect features, often limited to one Veda".

Looking at Pāṇini's description of Sanskrit, one can make the following observations. Pāṇini's *bhāṣā* "colloquial language", in terms of its description in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, has two major layers. One is the layer which is the abstracted common factor to which Pāṇini's unqualified rules apply. Forms derived with such rules are not felt to be explicitly dialectal. Within this non-dialectal core, we have several features. We have non-dialectal options, as well as historical deposits from several dialects of Sanskrit. It has deposits from the eastern as well as north-western Indo-Aryan dialects and it essentially represents a dialect mixture.²² However, it is important to note that Pāṇini did not feel that these elements in the core were dialectal. While these elements may have come about historically through dialect-mixture, they had spread far and wide, and were no longer deemed to be dialectally restricted. On the other hand there were other linguistic features which Pāṇini felt were clearly dialectal and he labelled them as such. Thus, it is possible to argue that the élite colloquial speech described by Pāṇini was in part a result of long-standing dialect-mixtures, but was in part regionally divergent. This would fit a description of Koinés given by Samarin (1971: 133): "what characterizes them linguistically is the incorporation of features from several regional varieties of a single language. This kind of amalgamation (or dialect-mixing) can lead to a certain amount of heterogeneity. That is, a koiné, caught at an early stage of its history, might consist of many kinds of speech that are not easily correlated with non-linguistic factors like region, function, social status, etc. In time, however, the mix might jell, not without varieties of speech like those characteristic of any normal speech community. ... Another feature that distinguishes koinés from pidgins, a feature that is implied in what has just been said, is that they are never detached from the languages they issue from."

To a certain extent, one may go along with the characterization of Pāṇini's *bhāṣā* as a koiné. Certain features of Pāṇini's *bhāṣā* discussed above do make it appealing to think of it as a koiné. However, it seems that besides some of these koiné-like features, there must have been a foundation of some distinctive Indo-Aryan dialect for Pāṇini's Sanskrit, and

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14. Language

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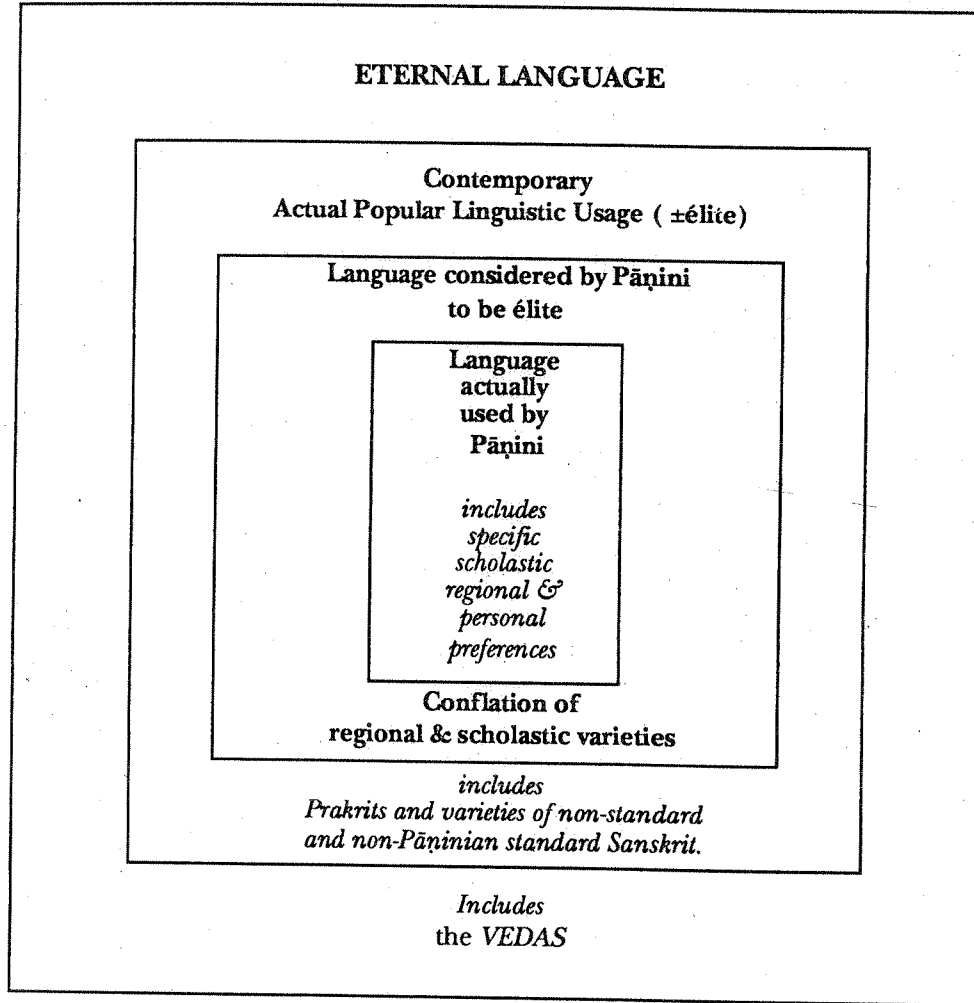
that it is not entirely built by the processes which go into the making of a koiné. For instance, we know that Vedic has numerous different types of infinitives, and many, though not all of them, do seem to continue into Aśokan Prakrits from various regions. However, Pāṇini's *bhāṣā* has retained only the infinitive in *-tum*. It would be impossible to explain this feature as a result of dialect-mixture, or levelling. The best way to explain it is to suggest that at the basis of Pāṇini's *bhāṣā*, there is a unique dialect of Sanskrit. Witzel (1989: 128) comments: "Regarding this (P's *bhāṣā*) local, educated form of Sanskrit, one can expect, *prima facie*, a North-Western dialect which is the same or similar to the language of the North praised by such texts as K(auṣītaki) B(rāhmaṇa) 7.6. A closer study reveals that his *bhāṣā* is a highly archaic, isolated language which is still very close to Vedic." Archaic in some respects, Pāṇini's *bhāṣā* also significantly contrasts with Vedic. Consider the fact that while Vedic had numerous types of infinitive forms, Pāṇini's *bhāṣā* retained only one of them, i.e. the infinitive in *-tum*. At the same time, as I have myself demonstrated elsewhere, Pāṇini's *bhāṣā*, is in some respects remarkably different from the later classical Sanskrit, and that its phonetic and syntactic peculiarities are better explained as those belonging to a frontier dialect of the Northwest.²³ This dialect of the Northwest, which was clearly held in high prestige even by those in the East, may have spread as the learned form of speech throughout North India, and formed the basis of Pāṇini's *bhāṣā*. This basic dialect may then have been argued by the processes of dialect-mixture, as well as by genuine regional peculiarities. We also know that the process of dialect-mixture continued after Pāṇini, and what appeared as regional peculiarities to Pāṇini were reduced to mere options within a homogenized linguistic stratum from the view point of Kātyāyana and Patañjali.²⁴

14. Language Described versus Language Used

Several recent studies have brought out an important distinction which the traditional commentators on Pāṇini have not been aware of. This is the notion that the language which was the target of Pāṇini's discription was somewhat different from the language which Pāṇini used. However, such a distinction is not always made. For instance, Kiparsky (1979; 7) says: "Pāṇini was describing not some fixed corpus of texts but all of Sanskrit as he spoke it." One can agree with Kiparsky's statement that Pāṇini described Sanskrit "as he spoke it" only in a limited way. Patañjali rightly points out that the science of grammar, in contrast with the traditions represented by the *Prātiśākhya*s, is not limited to any one particular branch of the Veda, but is inclusive of all.²⁵ Just as no one person belonged to all the branches of the Vedas, no one person ever spoke a language which represented effectively

a conflation of all traditions of usage. However, Pāṇini's aim was indeed to describe such a totality, which was inclusive of all domains of usage. This was the target language. On the other hand, the language which he himself used was in all probability a more uniform dialect representing a subset of the total target language. For instance, Kiparsky (1979) has conclusively demonstrated that Pāṇini marked numerous usages in terms of their degree of preference. Among alternating forms, the preferred alternative was marked with *vā*, the marginal alternative was marked with *vibhāṣā*, and alternatives with neutral value were marked with *anyatarasyām*. What is most significant is that Pāṇini was ecumenical enough to note the forms which he thought were less preferred or marginal, and yet in his own usage of Sanskrit in the text of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, Pāṇini generally uses only those alternatives which he marks as preferred alternatives.²⁶ Thus, the language used by Pāṇini is a subset of the language described by him in his grammar. I have shown in a forthcoming article on Sanskrit constructions with double objects as they are attested in Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*²⁷ that while Patañjali describes a very wide range of variation in the usage of these constructions, in his own usage of Sanskrit in the text of the *Mahābhāṣya*, he sticks to a particular subset of the alternatives. This makes us aware of the fact that while a grammarian may note the existence of a very wide range of grammatical variation in his conflated target language, in his own usage he may stick to a more homogenous individual dialect of Sanskrit. This is true of both Pāṇini and Patañjali. Thus, besides the fact that Pāṇini's *bhāṣā* may have a largely northwestern aspect,²⁸ and that Patañjali's *bhāṣā* may have a more Madhyadeśa aspect, these grammarians described a form of linguistic conflation which was far larger than the dialectal subsets used in their own usage. Thus, we are able to make a fourfold distinction in regard to the language of the Sanskrit grammarians.

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1. I would like to thank my colleague Professor Peter E. Hook for his constructive criticism.
2. For an evaluation of Whitney on Pāṇini, also see: Kiparsky (1979: 13ff).
3. Deshpande (1979: 43ff) shows in some details how the Brahmanical ideas of social prestige were not shared by the Jainas and Buddhists, and to that extent, Manu represents only the Brahmanical opinion.
4. *siddhe śabdārthasambandhe lokato 'rthaprayukte śāstreṇa dharmaniyamo yathā laukikavaidikeṣu, Vārttika 1, Mahābhāṣya, Vol. I, pp. 6-8.*
5. The irregular insertion is taught by P.7.3.3 (*na yvābhyām padāntābhyām pūrvau tu tābhyām aic*). The subsequent discussion is based on a quoted opinion of Vyāḍi and Gālava: *ikāṃ yañbhir vyavadhānaṃ vyāḍi-gālavayoḥ*, which contrasts with Pāṇini's general rule P.6.1.77 (*iko yañ aci*). For details, see: Deshpande (1978: 64, fn 2).
6. For a detailed discussion of this issue, see: Deshpande (1985).
7. For details on the use of Sanskrit in Patañjali's time, see: S.D. Joshi (1989), and M. Deshpande (forthcoming-a).
8. *yarvānastarvāṇo nāmarṣayo babhūvuḥ pratyakṣadharmāṇaḥ parāparajñā viditaveditavyā adhigatayāthātathyāḥ ꣳ te tatrābhavanto yad vā na tad vā na iti prayoktavye yarvānastarvāṇa iti prayuñjate yājñe karmaṇi punar nāpabhāṣante ꣳ, Mahābhāṣya, Vol. I, p. 11.*
9. *Mahābhāṣya* on P.2.4.56, Vol. I, p. 488. Hock-Pandharipande (1976: 119) take it as evidence of "a non-Brahmin who speaks correct Sanskrit and knows Sanskrit grammar sufficiently well to engage in a grammatical argument with a grammarian."
10. N. Wagle (1966: 102).
11. For a listing of such "colloquial" features of Pāṇini's Sanskrit, see: V.N. Misra (1966: 13); Bhandare (1986: 5-7); Hock-Pandharipande (1976: 115-116).
12. "Note in this respect also that Pāṇini has at least two rules making reference to linguistic differences depending on reference to caste (2.4.10 and 8.2.83, both referring to Śūdras), one of which (8.2.83) implicitly presupposes a mutually intelligible communication between speakers of the *bhāṣā* on the one hand and Śūdras on the other (unfortunately, Pāṇini does not state what language, if anything other than the *bhāṣā*, Śūdras would speak)." Hock-Pandharipande (1976: p. 116). I agree with Hock-Pandharipande view that these rules refer to different patterns within Pāṇini's *bhāṣā*. However, Kaiyaṭa seems to believe that one is expected to switch to Prakrit in responding to women and Śūdras. See: Joshi-Roodbergen (1986: 49-50).
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13. At least Patañjali would have us believe that women did not know the rules of prolation in responding to a salutation, and he says that those who do not know such rules are like women and should not be shown respect. See: Joshi-Roodbergen (1986: 49). The passages from Manu cited by Joshi-Roodbergen indicate that the Dharmaśāstras were equally concerned with such communication. See: *Manusmṛti* (verses 2.123, 125, and 126). Joshi-Roodbergen (1986: 50, fn. 151) suggest that the discussion of this passage in Kaiyaṭa implies that speaking to women and Śūdras one responds in Prakrit and not in Sanskrit. It is doubtful if such is Pāṇini's own intention. Pāṇini seems to suggest two patterns of response in *Sanskrit*, one more respectful, and the other less respectful.
14. *Āśvalāyanagr̥hyasūtra* 1.7.1-2: *atha khalūccāvacā janapadadharmā grāmadharmāś ca tān vivāhe pratiyāt / yat tu samānaṃ tad vakṣyāmaḥ*.
15. *Śatapatha-Brahmaṇa* 3.2.1.24. This has been restated by Patañjali in the *Mahābhāṣya*, Vol. I, p. 2. Hock-Pandharipande (1976: 119) rightly take these statements to mean that "at least from the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* on, correct speech was considered the duty of Brahmins (other people not being mentioned.)"
16. For a contrast to Joshi's views, see Kiparsky (1979: 7).
17. These examples are cited in the *Kāśikāvṛtti* on P.5.3.80 (*prācāmupāder aḍaj-vucau ca*).
18. Also see: M. Witzel (1989: 109, fn. 32).
19. Witzel (1989: 109) suggests a much closer connection between Pāṇini's *bhāṣā* and the local northwestern Prakrit. Salomon (1989: 277) says: "But in reality there is much in the literary and textual history of Sanskrit to suggest that, in terms of practical reality as opposed to linguistic ideals, Sanskrit and Prakrit were, at least in early times, not so much separate and irreconcilable opposites as the poles of a dialect spectrum."
20. Witzel (1989: 109): "One could, however, study colloquial late Vedic as comparable to Pāṇini's *bhāṣā*, notably some text portions found in ChU 6."
21. For recent discussions of the relationship between Vedic Sanskrit and Prakrits, see: Elizarenkova (1989); Witzel (1989); and Hinüber (1986). Elizarenkova (1989: 16) says: "One should say, in conclusion, that the state of things in the RV makes one admit in its language the existence not only of separate lexical borrowings, possessing a MIA phonetic aspect, but that of Pr. tendencies, which can be traced on all linguistic levels: phonetic/phonological, morphological and syntactic. That gives grounds for supposing that there might be two kinds of language in the period when the hymns of the RV were composed: a hieratic language of the religion of an OIA linguistic type, which is known as Ved. proper, and another one, a colloquial speech, used by the Ṛṣis in their everyday life and belonging to

- the MIA type (or being strongly marked by MIA tendencies)." Looking at the fact that Pāṇini's colloquial Sanskrit, though most likely a second language, was not restricted to the domain of religion, it seems more likely that Vedic was used even more extensively outside of the context of religion. This does not conflict with the co-existence of Vedic dialects with MIA-like dialects.
22. For details of dialects in Pāṇini, and dialect mixture in Sanskrit, see: Deshpande (1978) and Deshpande (1979a).
23. Deshpande (1982) and (1988).
24. For details of this argument, see: Deshpande (1978) and Deshpande (1985).
25. *sarvavedapāriṣadam hidam sāstram, Mahābhāṣya*, Vol. I, p. 400.
26. Kiparsky (1979: 19ff).
27. Deshpande (forthcoming-b).
28. For arguments about Pāṇini's *bhāṣā* as representing Northwestern traits, see: Deshpande (1982) and (1988).

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